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ACTION ARA-16

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-15 ADS-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-15 SP-02 /078 W  
-----058416 262235Z /67

R 261306Z AUG 80  
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8281  
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
USMISSION GENEVA

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

UNCLAS MADRID 12454

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SHUM, AR, SP

SUBJECT: MORE ON POSSIBLE DEATH IN MADRID OF ARGENTINE  
EXILE

REF: (A) MADRID 11686, (B) BUENOS AIRES 6262, (C)  
LIMA 7131, (D) GENEVA 10810

1. HERewith A RUNDOWN ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE  
NOEMI GIANOTTI DE MOLFINO CASE. AS ADDRESSES ARE AWARE,  
MRS. MOLFINO IS OR WAS AN ARGENTINE CITIZEN WHO WAS  
ALLEGEDLY KIDNAPPED BY ARGENTINE SECURITY SERVICES IN  
LIMA. LATER A WOMAN'S BODY, ULTIMATELY IDENTIFIED AS  
THAT OF MRS. MOLFINO, WAS FOUND IN MADRID.

2. AFTER VARIOUS CALLS FOR AN INVESTIGATION BY SPANISH  
AUTHORITIES INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE, INCLUDING  
CLARIFICATION OF POSSIBLE ARGENTINE INVOLVEMENT IN THE  
DEATH, NEWSPAPER REPORTS INDICATED THAT THE POLICE COULD  
FIND NO EVIDENCE OF FOUL PLAY IN THE CASE. THE POLICE  
SAID THAT THERE WERE NO MARKS ON THE BODY DISCOVERED IN  
MADRID IN LATE JULY NOR HAD THERE BEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF  
POISONING.

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.. THIS SATISFIED NO ONE, BUT THE CASE TOOK AN EVEN  
MORE BIZARRE TURN THE WEEK OF AUGUST 18 WHEN THE PRESS

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REPORTED THAT MRS. MOLFINO'S DAUGHTER ALEJANDRA SAID THAT, BASED ON POLICE PHOTOS, THE DEAD WOMAN WAS NOT HER MOTHER. THIS STORY WAS LATER DENIED AND MRS. MOLFINO'S SON AND DAUGHTER, BOTH NOW IN MADRID, SAID THAT DECOMPOSITION PREVENTED THE IDENTIFICATION THROUGH PICTURES. POLICE OFFICIALS TOLD THE PRESS THAT THEY WERE SURE IT WAS MRS. MOLFINO WHO DIED IN MADRID, EVEN THOUGH THE BODY WAS BURIED UNDER THE NAME MARIA DEL CARMEN SAENZ, NAME FOUND ON THE PASSPORT WHICH WAS WITH THE BODY WHEN DISCOVERED, BECAUSE THE ARGENTINE POLICE HAD SUPPLIED MRS. MOLFINO'S FINGERPRINTS AND THEY WERE IDENTICAL WITH THOSE OF THE DEAD WOMAN.

1. THE JUDGE IN CHARGE OF DELIVERING A VERDICT ON THE CAUSE OF DEATH APPARENTLY DID NOT THINK THAT WAS SUFFICIENT AND ORDERED EXHUMATION OF THE BODY. ON AUGUST 25 MRS. MOLFINO'S CHILDREN FORMALLY IDENTIFIED THE EXHUMED BODY.

2. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS IN THE MADRID PRESS THAT A REPORT ON THE CASE HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE UN HIGH COMMISSION ON REFUGEES IN GENEVA.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST OF THIS CASE IN MADRID. NEWS IS SLOW DURING AUGUST WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR SOME OF THE INTEREST IN THE CASE. BUT SO FAR IT ALSO PRESENTS ALL THE ASPECTS OF A GOOD SPY/MURDER NOVEL WHICH ALSO MAKES IT GOOD PRESS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO POUCH PRESS ITEMS TO ARA/SC, GERALD WHITMAN.

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